



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

**Frank J. Magill,
United States Attorney**

David Anderson, Public Affairs Specialist
(612) 664-5684; cell: (612) 730-2251

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Zimmerman woman pleads guilty to health care fraud

A 37-year-old Zimmerman woman pleaded guilty today in federal court to one count of health care fraud in connection with fraudulent Medicaid billing practices.

Michelle Barbara Pundt entered her plea Sept. 9 in Minneapolis before United States District Court Judge Joan Ericksen. Pundt was charged June 11.

According to Pundt's plea agreement, from January 2002 to June 2007, she knowingly and willfully obtained by false representations money owed by and under the custody and control of Medicaid, in connection with the delivery of and payment for health care benefits and services.

Specifically, Pundt admitted that she submitted and caused to be submitted Medicaid claims that overstated the number of units of Private Duty Nursing services provided to clients of her business, Allied Home Health Care Services.

Medicaid is a federal health care benefit program that began in 1965, and is administered by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). The program provides medical insurance for individuals whose incomes are insufficient to meet the cost of necessary medical expenses and who satisfy certain eligibility criteria.

Pundt faces a potential maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. Judge Ericksen will determine Pundt's sentence at a future date. This case is the result of an investigation by DHS, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Office of Inspector General and the Minnesota Medicaid Fraud Control Unit. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David M. Genrich.